

NEWS FROM:

International Terrorism and Nonproliferation Subcommittee



U.S. Rep. Ed Royce, Chairman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 28, 2005

Contact: Julianne Smith, 202-225-4111

Royce Statement on Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty

Hearing examines May 2 - 27 NPT Review Conference

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Today, the House Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation (ITNP) held a hearing on the issues surrounding the upcoming Treaty on the Nonproliferation on Nuclear Weapons Review Conference. The Conference will be held from May 2 until May 27 in New York City. ITNP Chairman U.S. Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA-40) issued the following opening statement:

"The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference opens on Monday in New York. The Conference, which has been held every five years since the Treaty entered into force in 1970, confronts high hurdles. There is no agreed-upon agenda. A successful conference is far from certain.

"Several developments have changed the landscape since the 2000 Review Conference: 9/11, which has intensified concern about nuclear terrorism; North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT and Pyongyang's declaration that it possesses nuclear weapons; the discovery of the sophisticated A.Q. Khan black market in nuclear technology, raising worries about undetected similar networks; and the surfacing of Iran's uranium enrichment capabilities and its consequent progress toward developing nuclear weapons. North Korea and Iran are state sponsors of terrorism. We are all concerned about their possible proliferation of nuclear technology and materials to terrorist groups. The most notable positive is Libya, which, with U.S. aid, disassembled its clandestine nuclear weapons program in 2003 after detection by the U.S. and the U.K.

"The Administration is right to expect the Conference to wield pressure against Iran and North Korea. The Treaty's credibility will suffer if its member states fail to confront these pressing cases, which would be unfortunate. The NPT has been a useful tool in checking nuclear proliferation. Without it, I believe, there would be more nuclear-armed states today. But, the NPT is in bad need of strengthening.

"The Conference should discuss the grave shortcoming of the NPT as it's commonly interpreted today: that states can legally develop all technologies relevant for nuclear weapons, including plutonium and uranium enrichment, except one - weaponization.

-- OVER --

Statement of U.S. Rep. Ed Royce, ITNP Chairman
"Previewing the Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference"
April 28, 2005
Page 2 of 2

"The Treaty does not mention a right to reprocessing or enrichment. As North Korea and Iran show, this interpretation is a very real problem. It is a problem that bodes poorly for the Treaty's effectiveness, unless norms are somehow changed.

"Some member states are charging that the U.S. is not sufficiently committed to eliminating its nuclear arsenal. They point to its rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, planned research into new nuclear weapons and evolving nuclear doctrine. The Administration counters, as we will hear today, by pointing to the significant reduction in the U.S. nuclear arsenal made over the last several years. There is no shortage of countries eager to berate the U.S.

"The international security situation has fundamentally changed since the NPT was drafted in the 1960s. The Additional Protocol should help, but more needs to be done. The Treaty needs sustained attention and innovative thinking, during the Conference and beyond. Our assumptions need constant checking if the NPT is to continue to be helpful in the critical task of stemming nuclear proliferation."

####